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Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Note verbale dated 27 August 2002 from the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country and is pleased to refer to the note verbale of the United States Mission to the United Nations (circulated as document A/AC.154/354 of 2 August 2002) concerning the non-issuance by the competent United States authorities of United States entry visas to the members of the Iraqi delegation to the tenth session of the Preparatory Commission of the International Criminal Court. The Mission has the honour to inform the Chairman of the following facts:

1. The Mission sent a formal request dated 7 June 2002 to the United States Mission to the United Nations requesting entry visas for Mr. Sultan A. Mahmoud and Dr. Riadh Hashim Al-Adhami to attend the aforementioned session.

2. A second note was sent on 11 June 2002 requesting a visa for Mr. Hammadi Asi Al-Falahi to attend the same session.

3. Due to the absence of the visa officer the Mission regularly deals with, the Mission contacted via phone the office of the Counsellor, Mr. Russell F. Graham, who is in charge of the visa section at the United States Mission. The contact occurred on 28 June 2002. A secretary at that office informed our Mission, after checking, that the visa requested was not yet ready.

4. On 5 July 2002, we contacted the same secretary from Mr. Graham's office, who returned our call to inquire about the starting time of the aforementioned session, at which point she was informed that the session had already in fact started and only one week remained before the end of the session. An hour later the Mission received another call from the secretary informing the Mission that the appropriate office at the State Department was contacted in Washington, D.C., and that no visas were yet ready. She suggested calling the following week to follow up when the regular visa officer returned to her post. The Mission ceased any follow-up attempt since the session would have ended by then.

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5. The Mission wonders why would the United States Mission deny receiving the above-mentioned formal requests. There is no logical reason that the Iraqi Mission would have raised the question of not issuing the visas if it had not sent formal notes to the United States Mission requesting those visas.

The Permanent Mission of Iraq would like to point out, in this regard, the note verbale of 23 May 2002 sent to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, issued as document A/AC.154/351, in which the Mission noted the constant delay and/or obstruction of the United States Government in granting entry visas to members of the Iraqi delegation in sufficient time to attend the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on children.

There have been numerous other visa requests that have been delayed for unreasonable amounts of time, exceeding two months, some of which are still pending with the United States Mission.

The Permanent Mission would be grateful if the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country would remind the United States Mission to uphold its obligations to the United Nations and its Member States in accordance with Headquarters Agreement signed between the United Nations and the host country.

The Permanent Mission of Iraq would appreciate it if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

New York, 27 August 2002